Current Accomplishments

While the state information technology plan focuses on the future, many agencies are already taking a leadership role in implementing technology projects. This section highlights a few of the many agency accomplishments that will be completed in the current biennium.

Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs)
The North Dakota Highway Patrol in conjunction with North Dakota State Radio is implementing a pilot program involving the use of MDTs in patrol units. The program involves the use of MDTs in sixty-five patrol units and the installation of ten base stations in State Radio tower sites. A MDT is a specially packaged laptop computer system containing a wireless communication package. This system allows field officers to directly access and query law enforcement databases on the local, state and national levels without State Radio dispatcher involvement. Such a program provides improved officer safety through the prompt receipt of information and handling of a field officer's information requests. Patrol time can also be increased by allowing crash reports and other routine reports to be filed electronically from the vehicle rather than in the office.

Tax Department Filing Project
A major revision of the tax return processing system has been implemented involving the tax return validation process and the accounting system. This revision replaces the existing mechanical validation equipment and establishes a data link between the validation system and the accounting system thereby eliminating the redundant entry of data. This project also includes the development of an Internet filing option for the sales tax returns and telephonic processing of withholding tax returns plus an electronic payment system. The project, scheduled for completion by June 1999, will expand taxpayer filing options, improve fund accounting and speed refund processing. The payment options have also improved through the implementation of an electronic funds transfer process.

Unified Court Information System
The Unified Court Information System (UCIS) is a comprehensive case management system used by the trial courts to manage all cases from the time of filing through post-judgement proceeding. This system is operational in thirty county courts including all but two chamber counties. An implementation plan been established to include McKenzie county in UCIS by January 1, 1999. The system used by Cass County operates in a similar architecture to UCIS but is a proprietary system. A cost benefit analysis has been prepared to evaluate the Cass system and its possible move or link to UCIS.

Presently, a system is being testing in Grand Forks, which provides for the electronic transfer of data between the state's attorney management system (SAMS) and the UCIS. This is a first step in data sharing between the justice agencies.

Year 2000
Governor Schafer has appointed the Information Services Division (ISD) as the Year 2000 coordinating agency for state government. The Risk Management Division and Attorney General's Office have developed a definition of Year 2000 compliance. The Purchasing Division will include the Year 2000 definition language on all purchase orders and contracts for products and services.

ISD developed a planning model to help state agencies create a Year 2000 compliance project. The planning model guides the agency through the phases of inventory and assessment, analysis and planning, conversion and testing, and implementation. It asks each agency to identify the key business applications critical for delivering their services. The key business applications will require a contingency plan. State agencies are asked to make monthly progress reports to the Information Services Division who will compile the information into a state report and post the results on the Year 2000 website. The Year 2000 website will provide valuable information and resources for agencies to use. All agencies are actively working on Year 2000 compliance with various degrees of progress.

North Dakota Education Telecommunication Council
A total of ten million dollars is being made available, in the 97-99 biennium, to school districts for K-12 technology related expenditures. The Legislature appropriated five million to a technology reimbursement fund. The Legislature also appropriated one million dollars to the Education Telecommunication Council and the Department of Public Instruction will receive four million in Federal Literacy Challenge funds that will be awarded on a competitive grant basis.

Current Accomplishments

The Education Telecommunications Council created a five-year Learning Technology Support Plan. The plan outlines how the use of available state and federal funds will be prioritized to achieve the following goals:

1. Every classroom will be connected to the information super highway. Small and isolated schools are a special emphasis of this program.
2. All K-12 teachers and administrators in North Dakota will have the training and support they need to help all students learn through computers and through the information super highway (Internet, World Wide Web, etc.).
3. All teachers and students will have modern computers in their classrooms.
4. Effective and engaged software and online learning resources will be integrated into every school curriculum.

The Education Telecommunications Council developed a grant application form and schools applied, on a competitive basis, for the funds. Applications were evaluated and scored by an independent scoring group. A formula of Average Daily Membership (ADM) and a weighting factor was used to determine the distribution of the funds. Awards totaling about three million dollars were made in May 1998. A second award of about two million is scheduled in late 1998.

Motor Vehicle Registration and Titling System (VRTS)
The Department of Transportation is re-engineering the Vehicle Registration and Titling System (VRTS). The existing system is over 25 years old and has out grown the ability to expand efficiently. Legislation requiring the license plate to follow the owner required major changes. In addition, the system needed extensive modifications to become Year 2000 compliant. A complete rewrite of the system was chosen as the most cost-effective solution. The new, re-engineered system will take advantage of the current technology and meet future needs for the Department of Transportation. The branch offices will be able to issue the registration, license and tag number immediately to the customer eliminating mailing delays. Titles will continue to be issued from the Central Office.

The development for the new system was awarded to Unisys and the project started in late 1996. The project has undergone several delays in implementation with the latest implementation date in the first half of 1999. The system is available for demonstration and the 1999 implementation date appears to be achievable.

Electronic Access to Legislative Information
The Legislature completed development of two projects to give greater accessibility to legislative information. The Legislature's web site provides bill text, amendments, House and Senate daily journals, status reports and committee hearing information during the legislative session. The information is updated each night with the previous days activities. The service will provide interested citizens, including students, the ability to track proceedings using the Internet from anywhere in the state. Legislative contact information, as well as biographical information and committee memberships, is also available.

The Legislature has also created a CD-rom containing information from the previous legislative session. The CD contains the complete bill status information, Senate and House membership data, and committee assignments. The CD is available to the public for a small fee. The CD will be available in June or July following each legislative session.

Impact of Information Technology on Higher Education
In the current biennium information technology use in the North Dakota University System (NDUS) has significantly transformed how we learn, teach and interact with others. Technology will continue to improve the educational process, and is required to keep NDUS campuses competitive. The following examples are just a small number of illustrations of how information technology has changed higher education:

- Students use technology on and off campus to access web pages developed by faculty to view assignments, supplementary class material, syllabi, simulations and class notes. Students also access global information to supplement local resources.
- Prospective undergraduate students can submit applications to their choice of NDUS institutions.
- E-mail and scheduling applications are used extensively by all students, faculty, and staff.
- Students, faculty, and staff have continually growing world wide communications capabilities.

Current Accomplishments

- Faculty use computers and projection systems for classroom presentations and lectures. Students are given instruction in using this same equipment and software.
- Dickinson State University has implemented global positioning satellite equipment with computers to train students in using technology to improve farm and ranch management practices. Computers have also been added to provide software for crop production, agriculture finance, and range management.
- Dickinson State University has a series of popular newly developed graphics arts courses utilizing computers and scanners.
- Mayville State University and Valley City State University have become "laptop" universities. Faculty and students use the laptops for teaching and learning.
- Mayville State University and Valley City State University community leaders have worked together to bring Internet access to the entire community. An Internet service provider provides access.
- Minot State University offers classes through the Internet. In the fall of 1998, 149 students from throughout North Dakota and out-of-state are enrolled in these classes.
- The North Dakota Interactive Video Network (IVN) system offers extensive distance education classes by using 19 higher education classrooms, one multi-purpose room at North Dakota State University (NDSU), five classrooms at the tribal colleges and 27 K-12 school sites. During 1997-98, the state supported IVN rooms were used a total of 19,774 hours.
- North Dakota State University and the University of North Dakota (UND) are fostering education and research through advanced Internet application development and networking by being Internet2 members.
- The space.edu program at UND enables students around the world to "meet" online and earn their degrees. The first graduates received their degrees in August, 1998.
- UND uses satellite technology to provide 1) physician education to rural hospitals in North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota and 2) aerospace programs to students outside of North Dakota.

North Dakota State Government Web Site

The North Dakota state government web site provides a gateway to information on the web pages of over fifty individual agencies. Road reports, hunting regulations, election information, public hearing schedules, permit information, job openings, and tourist information are among the many resources available on North Dakota's web site. Much of this information was previously available only in paper form. Electronic publishing has increased the availability of information and reduced mailing and duplicating costs.

Training, Education, Employment, and Management (TEEM) System and Network Redesign

During 1998, the Department of Human Services completed the roll out of the Training, Education, Employment, and Management (TEEM) system. The TEEM system is the technology behind the department's welfare reform initiative. It provides a single delivery system that allows a TEEM manager to assist the client through the eligibility and case management process. This system has been deployed to all 53 county social service boards.

The department will also redesign its network during the current biennium. As the Department's need for technology has grown, the network has not kept up the pace. With the completion of the redesign, the network will meet the statewide standards, allow for better management of network resources, as well as provide for future growth.